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**TITLE: NAPOLEONIC WARS AND UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WARFIGHTING FUNCTIONS**

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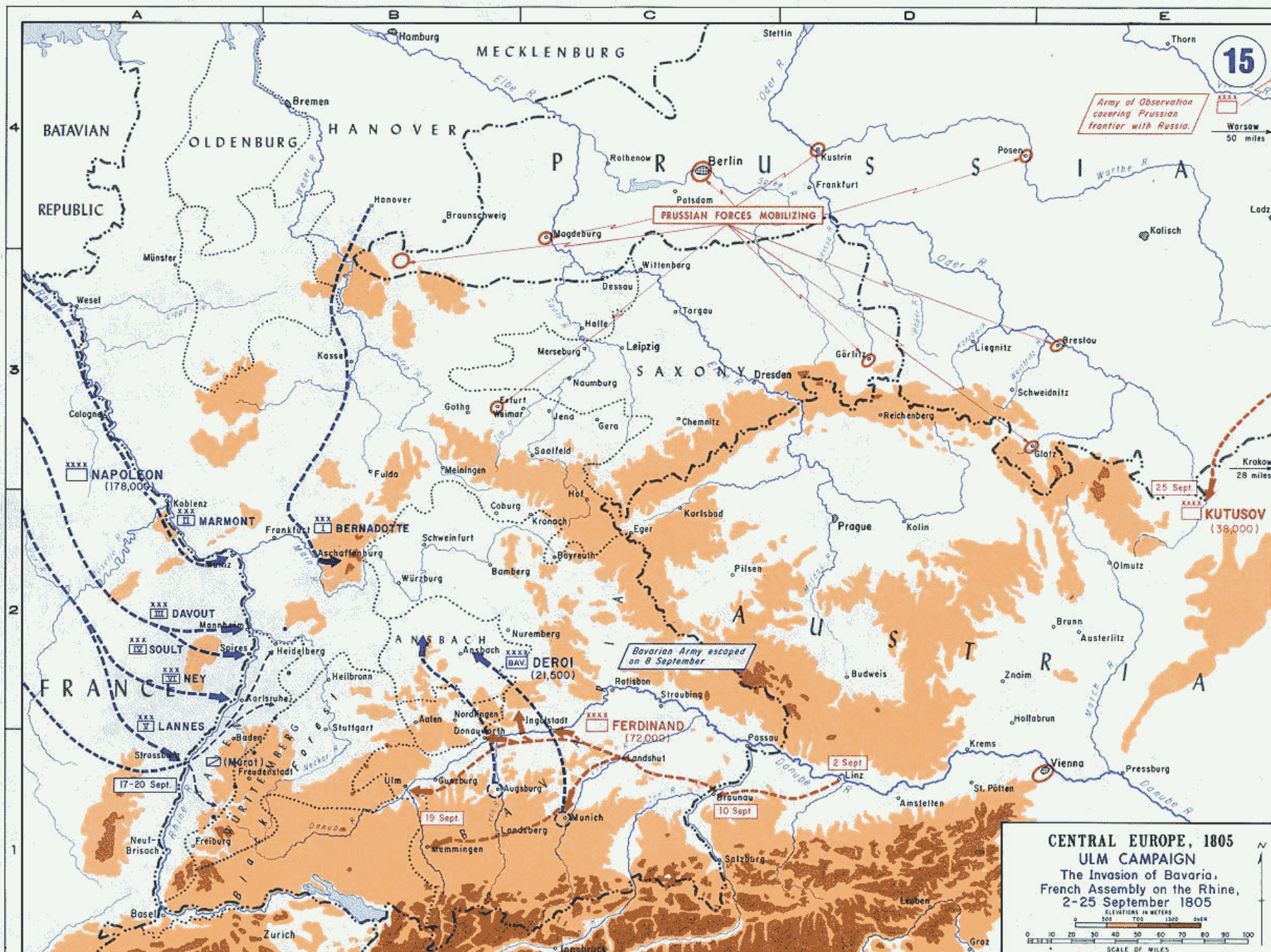
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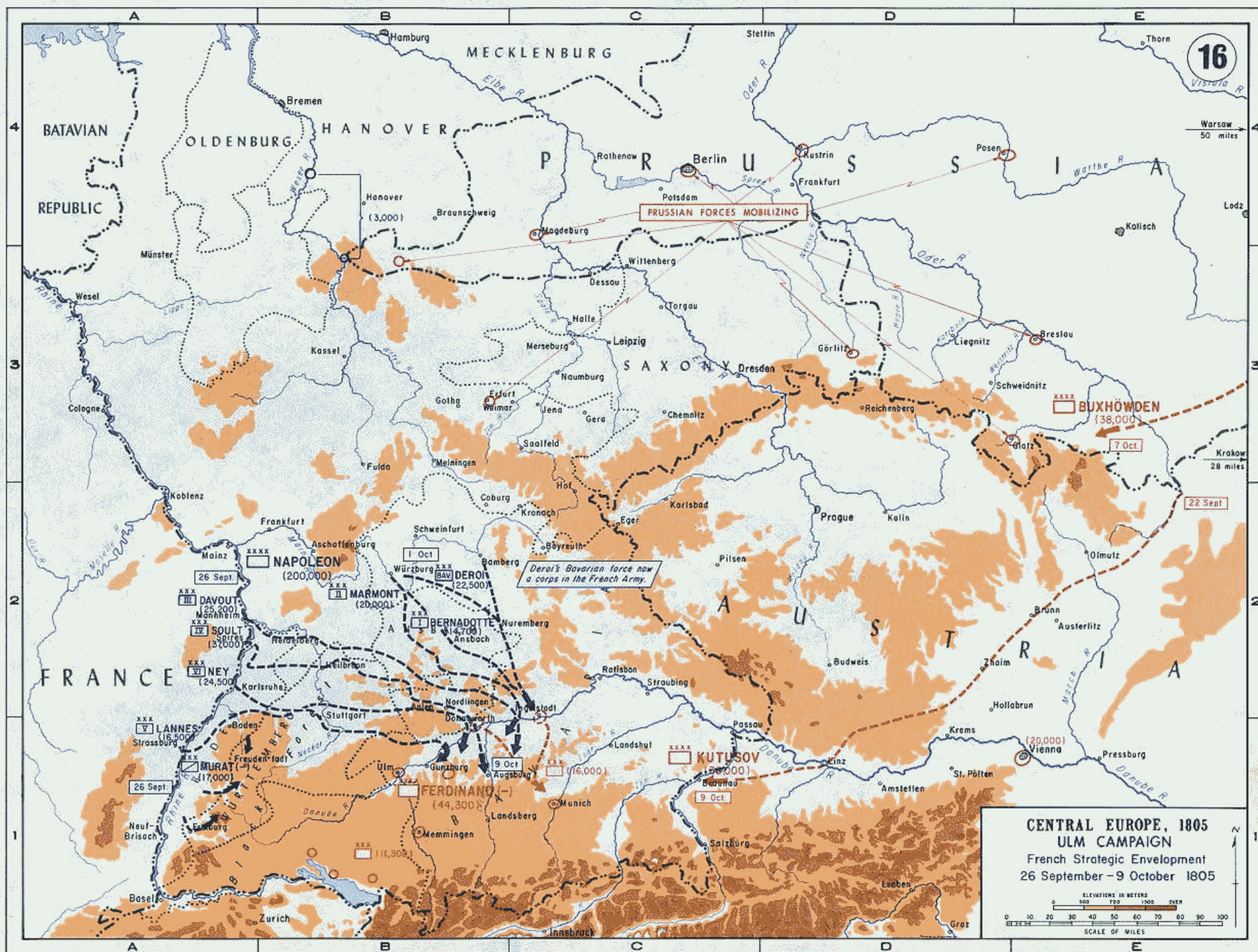
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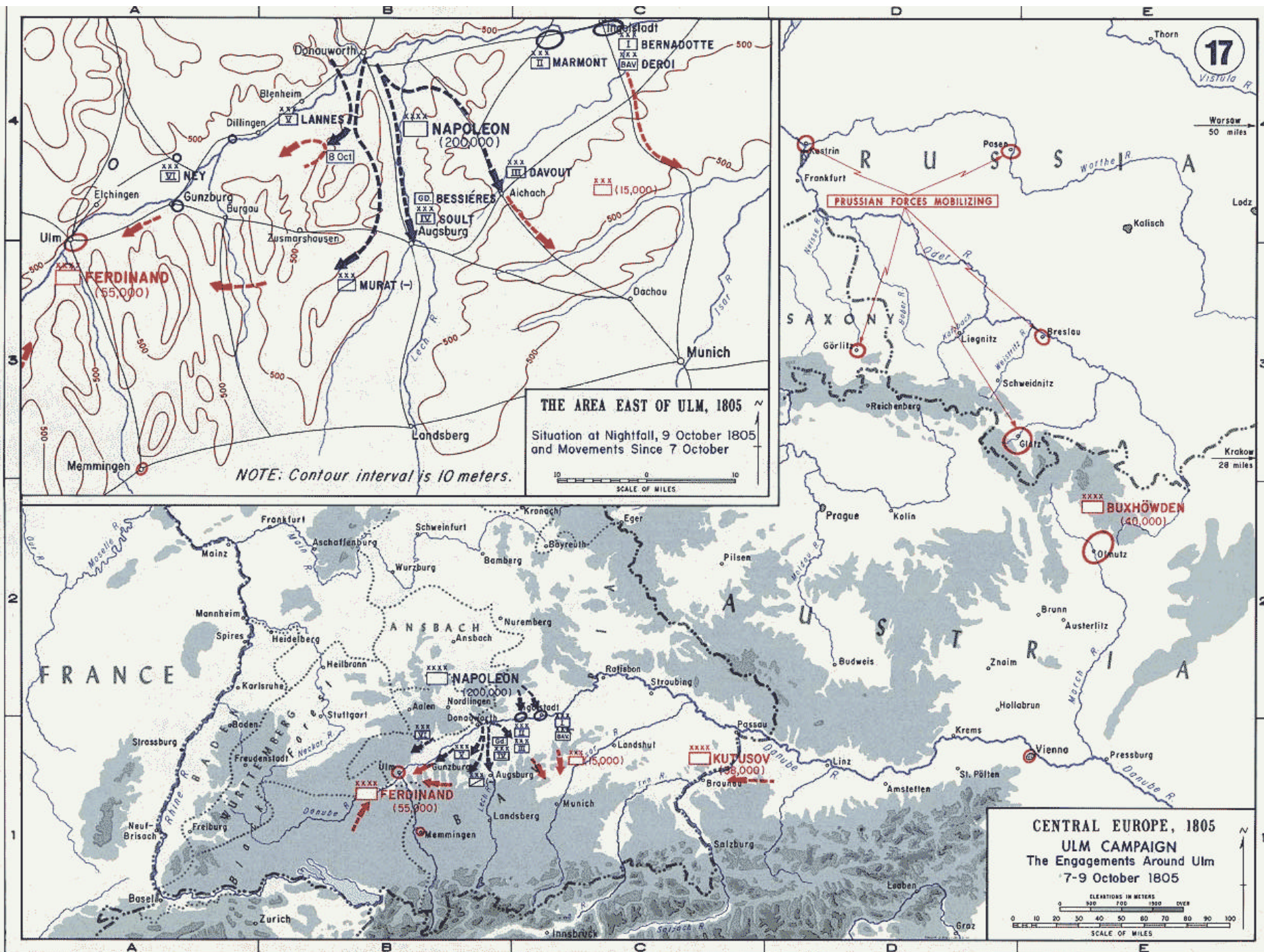
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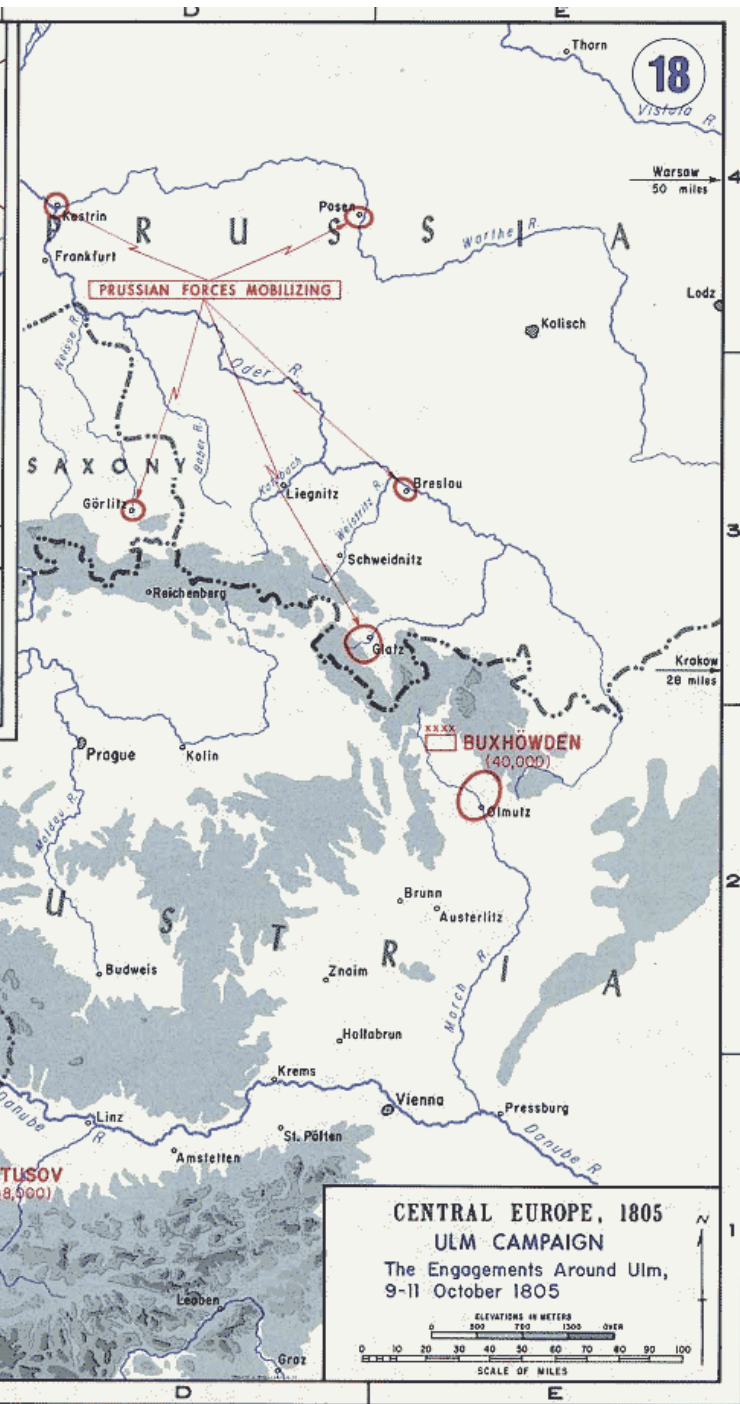
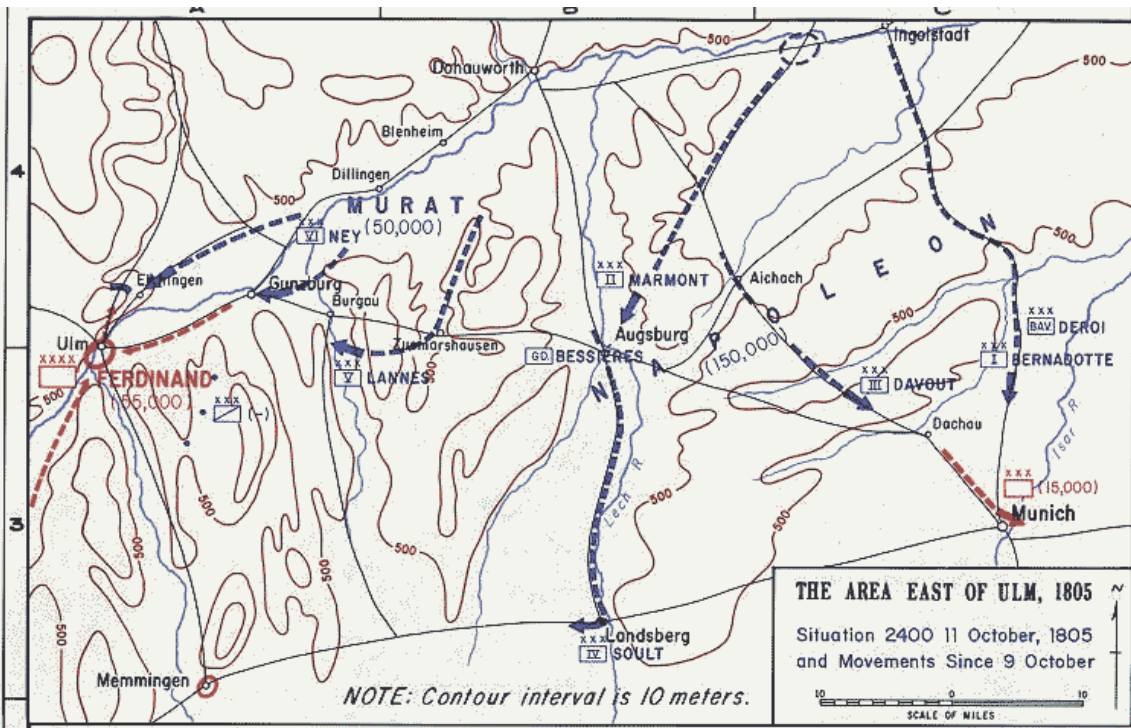
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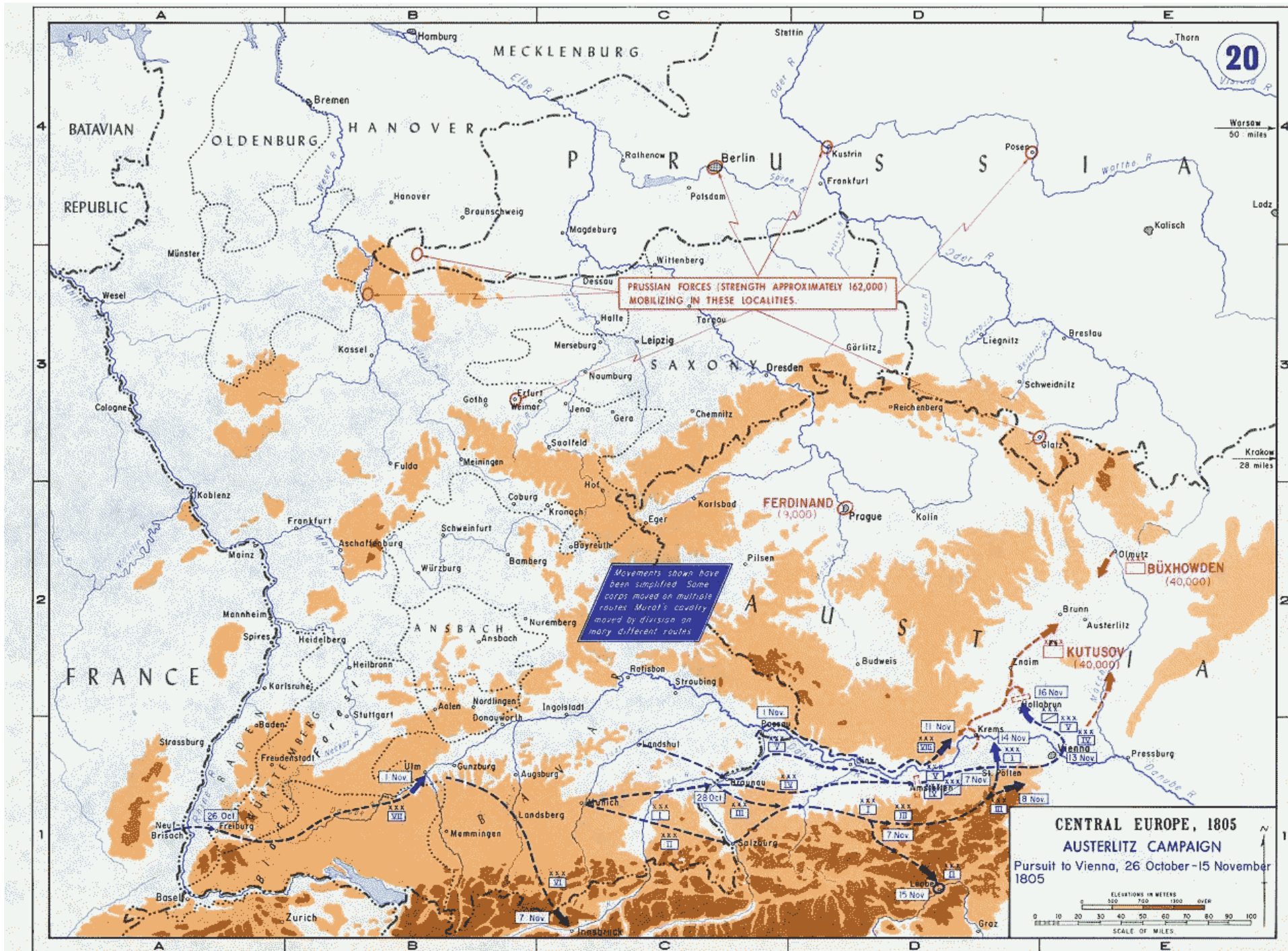
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Preface

This was a very difficult topic to research. The scope of Napoleon is so vast that I could have written hundreds of pages and still not covered the subject. My initial goal was to study Napoleon as a military leader. The intent was to determine if he was truly a tactical genius or simply just fortunate enough to have an obliging enemy. As I researched the topic, the complexity grew. Trying to narrow the scope proved a difficult task.

To shorten the final written product, I decided to apply the Marine Corps' six-warfighting functions to the three most important campaigns of Napoleon's career: Ulm-Austerlitz, Russia, and The Campaign of 100 Days, specifically the Battle of Waterloo, and analyze the results. This proved to be a more interesting process and narrower in scope.

I was very close to dropping the MMS program, but thanks to the encouragement of my advisors, Dr. Donald Bittner (Lt Colonel, USMCR, Ret.), and Lieutenant Colonel John R Atkins, USAF; and two classmates, Major Jim Glynn, USMC, and Lieutenant Commander Derrick Turner, USN, I pressed on.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Napoleonic Wars and the Marine Corps Warfighting Functions

Author: Major Gregory R. F. Brown, USMC

Thesis: Are the Marine Corps Warfighting Functions still viable when analyzing the Napoleonic Wars?

Discussion: The warfighting functions, when used as an analytical tool, clearly reveal strengths and weaknesses associated with outcomes. Ulm-Austerlitz demonstrated what could happen when a force with greater mobility (due to superior leadership and training) engages an enemy with ineffective intelligence (due to a lack of situational awareness, deception, weather, etc). The Russian campaign showed how a smaller force, operating in familiar territory and through skillful use of retrograde movement, can out maneuver a superior opponent and destroy it through logistical overreach. Finally, Waterloo revealed the importance of force protection (in this case well chosen ground) and the effects of isolating a superior operational commander from his troops due to a breakdown in command and control (conflicting orders, over centralization, small staff, and lack of subordinate initiative).

Conclusion: The Marine Corps warfighting functions conceptually are relevant to the Napoleonic Wars. They were as applicable then as they are today. These functions can be applied as a means of analysis to any operational level of conflict or campaign: e.g., Napoleonic wars, the World Wars, or Military Operations Other Than War.

Introduction

Many historians consider Napoleon Bonaparte a military genius. His military skills and tactics were thought of as revolutionary.¹ One way to appreciate Napoleon's contribution to warfare is to examine some of his greatest victories and defeats through the modern day lens of the Marine Corps' warfighting functions: Logistics, Command and Control, Force Protection, Fires, Intelligence, and Maneuver.² By comparing the (warfighting) functional strengths and weaknesses of two adversaries, the reader will be able to quickly assimilate the main successes and failures of classic operational level campaigns.

This study will analyze three of Napoleon's campaigns: The successful Ulm-Austerlitz campaign of 1805, the failed Russian invasion of 1812, and the campaign of 100 Days which culminated in the disastrous Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Using the Marine Corps' warfighting functions as a comparative model, it will help point out the opposing forces' strengths and weaknesses that contributed to the ultimate outcomes.

The approach of this paper will further portray these campaigns as a struggle between warfighting functions.

¹ Gunther E. Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars (London: Cassell, Wellington House, 1999), 32

² See Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 5-1 Appendix B for Definitions of the Marine Corps Warfighting Functions.

Namely, French maneuver versus Austrian/Russian intelligence (Ulm-Austerlitz), Russian maneuver versus French logistics (Russia), and British/Prussian force protection versus French command and control (Waterloo). These particular campaigns were chosen for analysis based on the historical research available, their contribution to the study of operational warfare, and their interrelationship in terms of leaders, forces, and time period.

The maximum impact in battle is obtained when the warfighting functions are harmonized to accomplish the desired objective in the shortest possible time with the fewest casualties.³ The goal of Napoleon (as an operational military commander) was to engage in a decisive action and force his enemies to capitulate as quickly as possible, thereby enabling him to maintain the size and strength of his army. He was not always victorious. Nevertheless, the modern reader can learn much from the success and failure of these great campaigns.

³ Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-2 Campaigning (United States Marine Corps, 1997), 76

Chapter One

The Ulm-Austerlitz Campaign, 1805 (French Maneuver over Austrian/Russian Intelligence)

Maneuver warfare requires a focus on the enemy. The goal is to avoid the enemy's strengths and exploit his weakness.⁴ Rapid maneuver was the cornerstone for tactics during the Napoleonic wars, a key element in Napoleons' defeat of his enemies. The warfighting functions of maneuver, command and control (in support of maneuver), and intelligence played key roles in his success during Ulm/Austerlitz in 1805. The speed at which Napoleon maneuvered his army, coupled with tight command and control and his enemy's lack of intelligence (situational awareness), produced two notable and stunning victories.

Since 1803, Napoleon had been preparing near Boulogne on the English Channel for what seem to be an invasion of Britain. Although he abandoned the invasion plan, he continued to train as if it were a certainty. French spies learned of a plan by the Third Coalition (Austria, Britain, and Russia) to join forces, push from Ulm to the Rhine, and link the south German front with North Italy.⁵ Napoleon continued to parade his soldiers along the Channel shore then, to everyone's

⁴ Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication(MCDP) 2 Intelligence (United States Marine Corps,1997), 3

⁵ David G Chandler, Austerlitz 1805: The Battle of the Three Emperors (London: Ospery, 1990), 9

surprise, on 25 August 1805 ordered his army to march into Central Europe. Napoleon's deception kept British attention on their own shores and confused the Austrians as to his true intentions.⁶ Napoleon personally remained in Boulogne until 3 September, when he returned to Paris. His itinerary was widely known but the actual location of his Army remained a secret.⁷

The Battle of Ulm

Austria and Russia had joined Britain in an alliance to destroy Napoleon. On 8 September 1805, Austria, led by General Karl Mack, invaded and eventually controlled the French province of Bavaria.⁸ Mack moved up the Danube to the city of Ulm in anticipation of the lead elements of Napoleon's Army moving towards the city.⁹

Mack concluded that Napoleon was capable of moving no more than 70,000 men out of Paris, since he also had to guard the Atlantic Coast, maintain order in the French capital, and protect his lines of communication. Mack further anticipated

⁶ Owen Connelly, Blundering to Glory, (Wilmington, DE : Scholarly Resources) ,78

⁷ Albert Sidney Britt III, The Wars of Napoleon (New York: United States Military Academy), 62

⁸ For a map of the situation see page 5

⁹ David Gates, Napoleonic War 1803-1815 (New York: Oxford University Press), 20

Napoleon would lose approximately 20,000 more men to attrition.¹⁰ His plan was to join forces with the Russians and attack the French before Napoleon could mass his forces. This would prevent the French army from proceeding deeper into Europe. However, there were two problems with this plan.

First, Napoleon saw the flaw in the allied strategy. He received intelligence reports from Strasburg on the location of the Austrian and Russian forces. These forces were widely dispersed across the continent, and by moving quickly he could strike at the Austrians before the Russians arrived.¹¹ Second, the Russians were using a different calendar (the Russians were using the Julian Calendar) with a difference of 12 days than the rest of Europe. Napoleon seized the initiative and moved his army with lightning speed to the Danube, catching Mack by surprise.¹²

Napoleon maneuvered his forces to surround the Austrians at Ulm. Mack failed to exploit an opportunity to cut Napoleon's lines of communication during the French army's movement due to the efforts of Marshall Ney who struck the decisive blow against Mack.¹³ At the battlefield near Ulm,

¹⁰ Britt III, The Wars of Napoleon, 60

¹¹ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 80

¹² <http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/dhistorymaps>. For a map of the situation see pages 7-10

¹³ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 80

27,000 of Mack's men surrendered on October 19 1805.¹⁴ Now nothing stood between Napoleon and Vienna. "I have accomplished my object," Napoleon wrote. "I have destroyed the Austrian army by simply marching."¹⁵

Napoleon's victory at Ulm overshadowed the near disaster that could have occurred. He maneuvered his forces further up the Danube than he had anticipated. Once he realized that he had almost by-passed Mack at Ulm, Napoleon accused his generals of stupidity for crossing the Danube and missing the Austrians. He essentially blamed everyone but himself for ordering the rapid movement across the river, essentially out maneuvering himself.¹⁶ His command and control suffered when forces were dispersed over long distances. Passiveness on the part of the Austrians also enabled the French to succeed.

On to Austerlitz

As soon as the Russians learned of General Mack's defeat, they retreated across the River Inn. Napoleon and his army commenced a pursuit of them on 26 October 1805, but could not catch them.¹⁷ On 28 November, Napoleon decided to negotiate with Tsar Alexander I. Count Dolgorukov aide-de-camp to the Tsar, was sent as spokesman. The Russians offered the French

¹⁴ Alistar Horne, How far from Austerlitz Napoleon, 1805-1815 (New York: St Martin Press), 116

¹⁵ Britt III, The Wars of Napoleon, 65

¹⁶ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 83

¹⁷ Chandler, Austerlitz 1805: The Battle of the Three Emperors, 16

peace only if they abandoned Italy. Napoleon rejected the Russian request, thereby making war inevitable.¹⁸ The battlefield Napoleon chose was near the village of Austerlitz, (now in the Czech Republic), where the countryside was dominated by a gently sloping hill, called the Pratzen Heights.¹⁹ Napoleon's army controlled the Heights, but he would now sacrifice this commanding position in a daring gamble to lure the Russians to attack his right flank.²⁰ With a thin line of soldiers on his right, he ordered his men to abandon the Heights and watched as enemy forces occupied it.

Seventy thousand Russian soldiers, personally commanded by Tsar Alexander I, stood ready to battle the French army. Just twenty-eight years old, the Russian Emperor was eager to achieve glory by defeating the seemingly invincible French Leader. But, Napoleon knew his man.

The Tsar called a council of war and argued for an immediate attack. Only Russian General Mikhail Kutuzov objected. Blind in one eye from a battle wound, the aging and hard-drinking veteran was contemptuous of his Austrian allies and wary of Napoleon. He advised Alexander to wait, but the Russian ruler found this unacceptable- for he had more men than Napoleon strongly believed Napoleon could be defeated.

¹⁸ Horne, How Far from Austerlitz: Napoleon 1805-1515, 133

¹⁹ Ian Castle, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 51

²⁰ David Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon (New York: Scribner), 410

Further, young soldiers from the most aristocratic families in Russia who shared the vision of crushing Napoleon surrounded the Tsar and gave him a false sense of superiority.²¹

Daybreak came and fog made the top of the Pratzen Heights float like an island above the sea of mist.²² From his command post on the Pratzen Heights, the Tsar, eager for battle, ordered the Allies down from the high ground toward the far end of Napoleon's weak right flank, anchored in the little village of Telnitz. However, Napoleon had a surprise waiting for them.²³

Napoleon had summoned two divisions of soldiers from Vienna, who covered the seventy miles in only two days. He had placed these reinforcements where they were least expected, and faster than anyone thought possible. His troops, exhausted after their long march from Vienna, struggled to hold on. So far, Napoleon said, "his enemy was behaving like they were conducting maneuvers on his orders."²⁴ Napoleon wanted the enemy to attack his right flank, seemingly the weakest point of the French line. He now had enough troops to defend it and

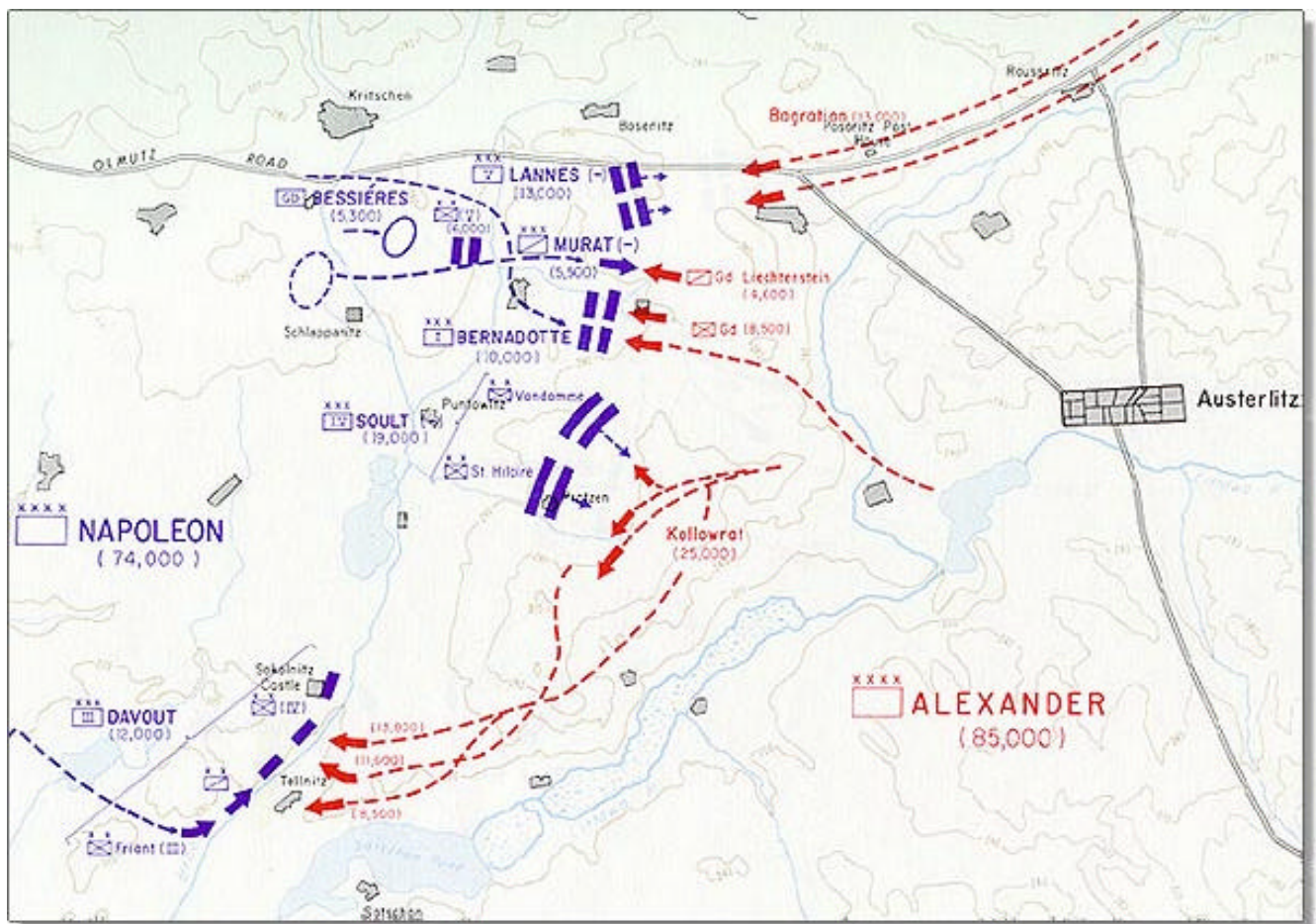
²¹ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 87

²² Horne, How Far from Austerlitz: Napoleon 1805-1815, 150

²³ Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 424

²⁴ Horne, How Far from Austerlitz: Napoleon 1805-1815, 170

more than enough for his own plan that called for an attack on the Pratzen Heights, which now had few defenders.²⁵



The Austerlitz Battlefield²⁶

Napoleon watched from his command post above the battlefield – waiting to spring his trap. Hidden in the haze at the bottom of the valley below the Heights were two French divisions – 17,000 men. Napoleon gave the order to advance: "One sharp

²⁵ Britt III, *The Wars of Napoleon*, 76

²⁶ <http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/dhistirymaps>; Additional map can be found on page 15

blow," he said, "and the war's over!" The fog was so dense the French soldiers could barely see ten paces in front of them.²⁷ As the sun began to rise, Napoleon's army appeared out of the mist. On top of the Pratzen, the Tsar watched the French materialize out of the valley. "Finding themselves attacked, when they had thought that they were the attackers," Napoleon said, "they looked upon themselves as half-defeated."²⁸ And so it was.

Austerlitz raised Napoleon's star to new heights. He won his greatest victory, the victory of which he would always be the proudest. *As he proclaimed to his troops, "Soldiers," he said. "I am pleased with you... You have decorated your eagles with an immortal glory... You will be greeted with joy, and it will be enough for you to say: I was at the battle of Austerlitz," for people to reply, There goes a brave man."*²⁹

Analysis of the Campaign

The Ulm-Austerlitz campaign was the pinnacle of Napoleon's greatness. With Napoleon's forces seemly far away, General Mack captured Ulm, anticipating that Russian forces would reinforce him prior to the French army reaching Austria. This decision reflected Mack's lack of effective intelligence and situational awareness. Napoleon's innovative maneuvering

²⁷ Chandler, Austerlitz 1805: The Battle of the Three Emperors, 58

²⁸ Horne, How far from Austerlitz: Napoleon 1805-1815, 181

²⁹ Horne, How far from Austerlitz: Napoleon 1805-1815, 182

deceived the enemy, and allowed him to attack the Austrians at their weakest point.

The speed at which Napoleon moved his army on the Ulm-Austerlitz battlefields enabled him to out maneuver his opponents. General Mack was surprised at how fast Napoleon moved *the grande armee* into Austria and defeated him at Ulm. Napoleon's intelligence told him the Russians were not close enough to Ulm to prevent him from defeating Mack. He encircled the Austrian commander and his troops at Ulm and forced his capitulation.

Maneuver again enabled the success at Austerlitz. Napoleon's tactical movement from the Pratzen Heights deceived the enemy into thinking his forces were withdrawing. In actuality, Napoleon was maneuvering his forces into attack positions. Needing more troops, Napoleon summoned them from Vienna, and they marched over seventy miles in forty-eight hours and were placed into battle positions.

Napoleon maintained centralized command and control of his army and, as such, he wanted to be aware of its every move. However, there was also an inherent weakness in his headquarters: he retained only a small personal staff in order to direct his large forces. Thus, this staff was not fully adequate for operational level of war actions and never became the brain trust of the French Army. Napoleon was his own

operations officer and made all strategic, operational, and tactical decisions.³⁰ His staff mainly disseminated his orders to the army, with some members attending to his personal needs. Still, Napoleon's untiring supervision ensured the proper timing of his counterattack on the Pratzen Heights, which achieved superiority of combat power by striking the disorganized Russians from an unexpected direction.³¹

Even though this was not a factor in his victory at Ulm-Austerlitz, Napoleon's logistics support was not properly planned. Prior to the battle of Ulm, he discovered that his supply system at Strasburg was barely organized. In other armies this would be a source of panic; however, Napoleon expected his army to temporarily live off the land and save French resources.³² This lack of logistics planning would later prove crucial during the Russian campaign.

³⁰ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 68

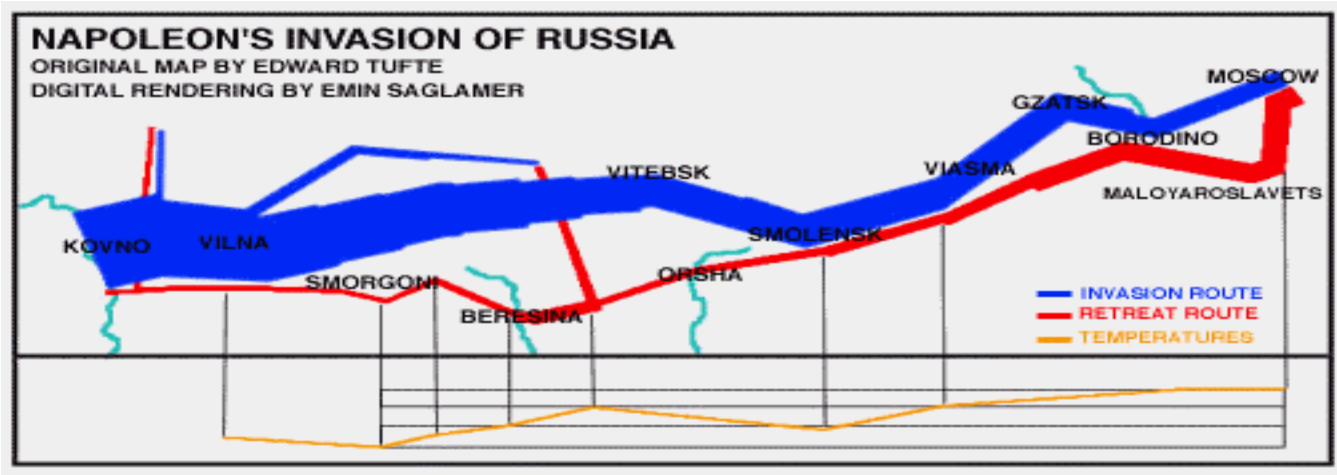
³¹ Britt III, The Wars of Napoleon, 78

³² Britt III, The Wars of Napoleon, 62

Chapter Two

The Russian Campaign, 1812

(Russian Maneuver over French Logistics/C2)



Napoleon's Russian Invasion and Retreating Route³³

The warfighting functions of logistics, command and control, and maneuver were highlighted during the invasion of and retreat from Russia. Logistics planning was a key reason why Napoleon was thoroughly defeated in Russia. The French army was unprepared for the overall conditions of the Russian landscape during this period of time. French command and control also became a significant problem due to the expanse of Russian battle space, the size of the French army, and a breakdown of discipline due to a lack of supplies. Additionally, the Russians effectively used an operational level retrograde maneuver to stretch the French army's

³³ <http://www.ddg.com/lis/infodesignf96/emin/napoleon/images/13.jpg>

logistics lines, destroy all available food sources during their retreat, and harass the French army during the latter's retreat from Moscow.

The Invasion of Russia

At midyear in 1812, Napoleon's military strength was at its peak. He was also becoming increasingly impatient with Tsar Alexander I, who refused to abide by the Treaty of Tilsit (signed on July 7 1807). Tensions between Russia and France increased in April 1812 when the Tsar was bold enough to suggest he might address Napoleon's economic concerns in exchange for the French evacuation of Prussia.³⁴

This offer was rejected and on 4 June 1812, Napoleon entered Russia leading his largest army. The central column consisted of three armies, commanded by Napoleon, Viceroy Eugene De Beauharnais, and Jerome Bonaparte. On the left flank was Marshal Alexandre MacDonald's corps, and on the right flank was Field Marshal Karl Phillip Schwarzenberg.³⁵ By 23 June, all of Napoleon's forces were in Russia, with Napoleon's main army between Kovno and Pilviszki. De Beauharnais's army was around Kalvaria, Jerome Bonaparte with his VII Corps was near Novrogod, Macdonald with X Corps was at Tilsit, and Swarzenberg's Austrians were near Siedlice. All

³⁴ Philip Haythornthwaite, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, (London: Arm and Armor Press, 1978), 111-113

³⁵ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 160

total the invasion force numbered approximately 499,000 men, with 1,146 guns. At the time, Russians had an army of 230,000 men.³⁶

Napoleon's plan called for his main force to destroy Field Marshal Mikhail Barclay de Tolly's army in a series of envelopments at Niemen. Jerome Bonaparte was to lure General Peter Bagration towards Warsaw and fix him at either the Narew or Bug Rivers, until Napoleon, having defeated Barclay, could sweep into his rear.³⁷ The plan looked good on paper, but failed because de Tolly was able to evade a direct confrontation with Napoleon's army and began an operational withdrawal toward Moscow.

The plan also collapsed because of logistics and command and control problems by the French. Logistics efforts failed to keep up with the French advance deep into Russia. Decisions were also delayed because Napoleon continued to function as his own operations officer instead of using his staff, who were also not trained or prepared to function as an operational entity. Napoleon's personal style of command and control was strained beyond the breaking point due to the sheer size of his army and the vast open battle space of Eastern Russia. His principal marshals, used to having

³⁶ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 160

³⁷ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 160

Napoleon involved in their operations, also failed to exploit several battlefield opportunities.

The Russians continued their withdrawal into the town of Vilna. Again Napoleon tried to envelop Barclay, but de Beauharnais was late in moving up the right flank.³⁸ The march from the banks of Niemen to Vilna was also much tougher than expected. The weather was either too hot or too rainy. Precipitation turned the poor quality roads into muddy tracks that rendered the carriages impossible to move. Most importantly, horses started to die by the hundreds, which affected both combat and logistical capabilities.³⁹ Several bridges could not deal with the load and gave way. Each soldier carried his own four-day ration, but these rations were all consumed during the first day due to lack of discipline.

The country around the route of advance did not offer much nutrition for the starving soldiers in the march. The wells had been polluted by dead horses thrown in them by the Russians. The cattle had a hard time keeping up with the army's rate of March since the animals were not used to marching 15 miles in six to seven hours. The immense heat following the relentless rainstorms dried up the tracks, but

³⁸ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 160

³⁹ Albert Sidney Britt III, The Wars of Napoleon (New York, United States Military Academy), 170

soon turned the muddy roads into swirling clouds of dust, which also hindered the army.

Vilna was occupied on 26 June 1812 without a fight.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, it provided little for the army's needs. The Russians, in abandoning the town, destroyed most of its stores and houses. The rest of the supplies were exhausted within the first day, consequently foraging, looting, and general indiscipline became epidemic.⁴¹ Napoleon remained in Vilna for three weeks, in part to rest, replenish, and tend to political matters in France. Meanwhile, his main force temporarily lead by Murat followed Barclay towards Vitebsk.

All through this march, Napoleon seemed to make ambitious assumptions about his army's ability to continue without proper food and shelter. The rate of march by the army also prevented the troops from foraging for the limited supplies which might be available. Napoleon kept promising the soldiers that they would get a good rest at Vitebsk,⁴² which they entered on 29 July 1812 with 100,000 fewer men than with what they started (most of whom were either sick or staggering from the march).⁴³ It is interesting to note that Napoleon had penetrated deep into Russia without fighting a major battle,

⁴⁰ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 160

⁴¹ Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 774

⁴² Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 160

⁴³ Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 780

but had lost approximately one-third of his forces due to exhaustion and disease.⁴⁴

Intelligence reports confirmed that the armies of Barclay and Bagration had linked up in the city of Smolensk. Smolensk is an ancient city built on high bluffs flanking each side of the Dnieper. High 17th century brick walls, 25 feet high and 10 feet thick at the base, encircled the city.⁴⁵ The Russians used these fortifications for protection while firing cannons on the approaching French troops. By dusk, the French had control over the southern suburbs of the city but the Russians still controlled the town. The Russian troops then started to retreat eastward, abandoning the city. Their retreat was received with delight by Napoleon, while the news stirred controversy in Moscow's political circles.⁴⁶

When the French troops entered the city, Smolensk was in ruins, with the streets littered with dead and burnt bodies. Napoleon lost a further 10,000 men during the Smolensk battle and now his army was reduced to 145,000 men since he left Niemen.⁴⁷ His heaviest losses continued to be primarily due to administrative and logistics breakdown. Large amounts of supplies were dumped due to lack of adequate transportation,

⁴⁴ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 161

⁴⁵ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 164

⁴⁶ Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 786

⁴⁷ BrittIII, The Wars of Napoleon, 172

and lack of sufficient medical supplies exacerbated the outbreak of dysentery and typhus.⁴⁸ Napoleon thus lost half of his invading force not to battle, but to sickness, disease and exposure to the harsh Russian weather.

At this point Napoleon faced a critical decision. Should he consolidate his position and renew his offensive in 1813, or should he continue on to Moscow, now an alluringly 240 miles east. On 28 August, Napoleon made his decision to resume his advance. As the Russians neared Borodino, they halted their retreat while the French continued the pursuit.

The village of Borodino was 107 kilometers west of Moscow.⁴⁹ The battlefield was open farmland where the corn crops had just been harvested. There was a very dense forest behind the Russian forces, but their position was not a strong one since the battlefield was flatland with no major obstacles. The battle began on 7 September 1812 at 6 a.m. in what was described as a pounding match, and ended with Kutuzov's order to retreat at 3 a.m. on 8 September. Both sides had brutal losses: The Russians lost around 44,000 men and withdrew toward Moscow, while the French lost approximately 35,000.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 164

⁴⁹ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 164

⁵⁰ Haythornthwaite, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 123-125

Napoleon entered Moscow on 14 September 1812, with 95,000 men. The city was nearly deserted by the time the French arrived with only a few merchants and businessmen remaining behind. Although the army had strict orders against pillage, the men could not be controlled and they forced themselves into the palaces and rich houses. Some time after Napoleon's arrival on 14 September, fires were started in various locations in the city. At first these were thought to be accidents, but when the conflagrations started swallowing large parts of the city, it was obvious the Russians were setting them.⁵¹

Having captured the religious capital city of Russia, Napoleon was convinced the Tsar would make peace.⁵² He remained in Moscow for weeks waiting for a response from Alexander I about his repeated overtures for peace. The French Emperor also stayed in Moscow for one other reason: He believed any movement from the city would be interpreted as a sign of weakness.⁵³ After several unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a peace, Napoleon realized his situation in Moscow was untenable. Another important time for a decision had arisen.

⁵¹ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 171-173

⁵² Haythornthwaite, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 125

⁵³ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 174

The Retreat from Moscow

The French army's retreat from Moscow began on 19 October 1812. It has generally been forgotten that the utter lack of discipline in the French army, and not just the climatic conditions, was responsible for the appalling disasters that ensued.⁵⁴ Napoleon had intended to move south through the fertile region around Kaluga and reap the resources of the untouched territory. However, on 24 October, Kutusov attacked the French army at Malojarslavets. The fighting was fierce and Napoleon decided to return via the invasion route.⁵⁵

Kutusov failed to exploit his success and allowed Napoleon to return to the northern route via Borodino to Smolensk,⁵⁶ but he realized it would be better to harass the French army and let them disintegrate from exhaustion and lack of supplies rather than suffer the casualties of a major battle.⁵⁷ Kutusov had now overtaken the French, but he made no effort to close with them. Rather he kept on their flank, molesting them with Cossacks and picking off stragglers. The French army reached Smolensk on 13 November with only 41,000 troops where there was a total breakdown of any remaining discipline. The orderly retreat from Moscow had now become a

⁵⁴ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 168

⁵⁵ David G. Chandler, Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1979), 263-264

⁵⁶ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 169

⁵⁷ Haythornthwaite, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 128

rout where murder, looting, drunkenness, and suicide were commonplace.⁵⁸

Napoleon dispatched orders to Marshal Claude-Perrin Victor and Marshal Nicolas-Charles Oudinot to join him at Borisov on the Beresina River. Napoleon received information that Admiral Pavai Tschitshagov was closing in on Borisov from the south. He then selected Studienka as the point of passage and at 1 a.m. on 13 November sent orders to Oudinot to march forward and construct bridges.⁵⁹ During the execution of these orders Oudinot encountered the Russian advanced guard near Borisov and drove the latter back in chaos, but not before the Russians destroyed the existing bridge.⁶⁰

The sudden resumption of offensive operations allowed time for Victor to move up and for Oudinot to construct the bridges at Studienka. Napoleon sent his pontoon handlers under General Jean-Baptiste Eblé, but on their arrival they found that no preparations had been made and more time was lost.⁶¹ By 4 p.m. on 13 November the bridges were finished and the crossing began, but not without resistance by the Russians who were gradually closing in. The crossing continued all night, though interrupted from time-to-time by failures of the

⁵⁸ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 170

⁵⁹ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 170

⁶⁰ Haythornthwaite, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 131

⁶¹ Haythornthwaite, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 131

bridges. All day during the 27th stragglers continued to cross, covered by such combatants as remained under sufficient discipline to be employed. At 8 a.m. on 28 November, however, Tschitschagov and Field Marshal Ludwig Wittgenstein moved forward on both banks of the river to the attack, but were held off by the splendid self-sacrifice of the few remaining troops under Ney, Oudinot, and Victor. Around about 1 p.m. the last body of regular troops passed over the bridges with only a few thousand stragglers remained beyond the river.⁶²

On 5 December having reached Smorgoni and seeing that nothing further could be done by him at the front, Napoleon handed over the command of what remained to Murat and left for Paris to organize a fresh army for the following year and attend to political affairs in the capital. Traveling at great speed, he reached the Tuileries on the 18th, after a journey of 312 hours.⁶³ Following the emperor's departure, the cold set in with increased severity, with the temperature falling to minus 20 degrees. On 8 December, Murat reached Vilna with the intentions of carrying out Napoleon's instruction of at least eight days rest. But many soldiers were crushed to death during the mob rush to gather the

⁶² Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 842-844

⁶³ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 179

plentiful supplies while others died drunk in the streets from exposure.⁶⁴

The Prussian contingent, under Field Marshal John David Yorck, which formed part of Macdonald's command near Riga, then changed sides with the Russians via the negotiated convention of Tauroggen (30 December). This deprived the French of their last support on their left flank. Königsberg thus became untenable, and Murat fell back to Posen, where on the 10 January 1813 he handed over his command to Eugène Beauharnais and returned to Paris.⁶⁵

Analysis of the Campaign

The French operational campaign and redundant tactical moves collapsed under the weight of its own logistical requirements. This collapse was exacerbated by the Russians' operational level retrograde maneuver. Napoleon calculated on fighting a decisive battle within a month after crossing the Niemen. However, the Russians generally refused to oblige, retreated and ultimately abandoned Moscow. The key to the Russian success was in their "scorched earth" actions. They destroyed all available food sources and contaminated water wells during their withdrawal while luring Napoleon deeper into Russian territory without adequate supplies.

⁶⁴ Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 850

⁶⁵ Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 844

With large logistics requirements, Napoleon was forced to slow his rate of march and delay any advancement to allow his logistics to catch up. The poor road conditions and other weakened transportation infrastructures during the heavy rains hampered the movement of French supplies while the destruction of Russian resources prevented the French army from living off the land. The Tsar's refusal to negotiate peace also aggravated the French logistical situation by keeping the French in Russia without winter clothing.

Additionally, Napoleon's command and control abilities were incapable of moving his army fast enough to surround the Russians. The Russians always eluded the French army because of the relatively slower responsiveness on the part of Napoleon's marshals.⁶⁶ The French ability to deliver centralized execution orders could not match the dimensions of the Russian battle space.

During the retreat from Moscow, a general lack of discipline caused the French army to trade vital supplies for loot captured during the Russian campaign.⁶⁷ This placed a strain on the already overworked horses, and slowed the progress of the retreating army. When the first snow fell on 4 November 1812, widespread panic overtook the troops and starving soldiers abandoned guns and wagons in search of food

⁶⁶ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 169

⁶⁷ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars 171

and were consequently killed by the Cossacks. Napoleon had lost control of his army and could no longer provide them protection from the Russian forces. In a sense, the *Grande Armee* disintegrated from a combination of internal ill discipline, the weather, lack of supplies and the actions of the Russian army, Cossacks and guerillas.

Chapter Three

The Waterloo Campaign, 1815

British/Prussian Force Protection over French C2

The Battle of Waterloo was the final engagement of the Napoleonic Wars. During this climatic battle, the allies used effective force protection (supported by maneuver, and command and control) against a weakened French command and control system.

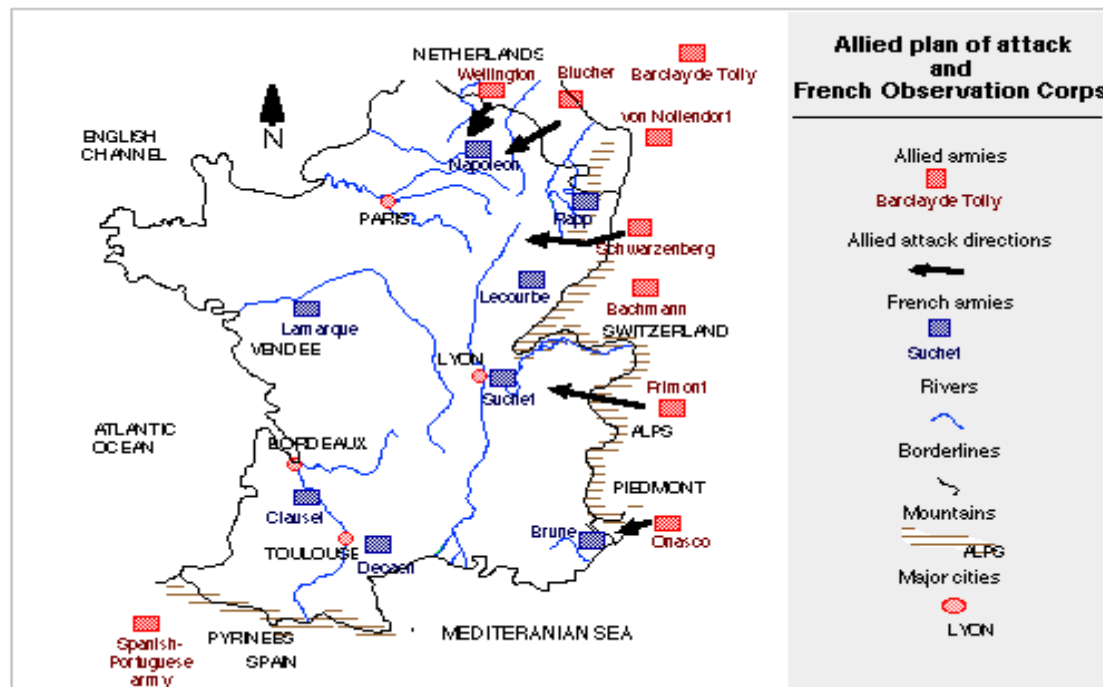
In 1814, a coalition of major powers (Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia) defeated Napoleon and forced his abdication and exile to the island of Elba. On 26 February 1815, while the Congress of Vienna was in session (to discuss the post-Napoleonic era of Europe), Napoleon escaped from his exile and returned to France. Many his former verterans flocked to his side, and on 20 March 1815, he again ascended the throne.⁶⁸ The Congress of Vienna, alarmed by Napoleon's return to power, reacted quickly to the crisis. On 25 March Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia agreed to contribute 150,000 troops to an invasion force to be assembled in Belgium near the French border.⁶⁹ A majority of other countries present at the Congress also pledged troops for the invasion of France, which was to be launched on 1 July 1815.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 192

⁶⁹ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 204

⁷⁰ Andrew Uffindell, Napoleon: The Final Verdict (London: Arms and Armour press), 161

Napoleon, learning of the invasion plan, was determined to attack the allies on their own ground before their armies could form. He mobilized an army of 360,000 partially trained soldiers within two months.⁷¹



Allied Plan of Attack at Waterloo⁷²

On 1 June 1815, Napoleon, moving with speed and secrecy, reached and crossed the Franco-Belgian border with 124,000 of his troops. Another 56,000 men were left behind in supporting positions. His sudden arrival caught the allied command unprepared.⁷³

The Battles of Ligny and Quartre Bras

⁷¹ Connelly, *Blundering to Glory*, 205

⁷² <http://www.Battle of waterloo.com>

⁷³ Rothenberg, *The Napoleonic Wars*, 197

Marshal Ney was instructed to take the crossroads at Quartre Bras on 15 June.⁷⁴ The crossroads were of strategic importance to the French because they anchored their internal lines of communication. On that date, the site was weakly held by a brigade of Dutch-Belgian infantry. Unfortunately Ney was not the commander he used to be.⁷⁵ When his probing force was repulsed, Ney ceased his attack. Napoleon then stressed to Ney the importance of taking the crossroads and urged him to continue his attack, with orders to take the crossroads and swing in on the right and fall on the Prussian left flank at Ligny. Ney continued his attack on Quartre Bras on 16 June, but did so cautiously and thus enabled the British to reinforce the position.⁷⁶

Simultaneously, Napoleon concentrated his forces for an attack on the Prussians at Ligny. The Prussians were forming up on exposed positions. The French opened their attack with a hail of cannon fire.⁷⁷ The Prussians, exposed to the cannon fire, suffered heavy casualties without being able to fight back. Napoleon next attacked the Prussians on the left and in the center. The Prussians began to give way. But Ney, who was supposed to fall on the Prussian right flank and thereby complete the Prussian defeat, was himself fully occupied at

⁷⁴ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 198

⁷⁵ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 208

⁷⁶ Uffindell, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 171

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Wootten, Waterloo 1815: The Birth of Modern Europe (London, Osprey), 33

Quatre Bras. Because of this, the Prussian defeat at Ligny was incomplete. The Prussians were able to reform and conduct an orderly retreat towards Wavre, pursued halfheartedly by the French army.⁷⁸ Napoleon ordered his left wing, under Ney, to attack a brigade of Wellington's cavalry at Quatre-Bras, north of Charleroi.⁷⁹

Early in the afternoon of 15 June, Napoleon heard the sound of Ney's artillery at Quatre-Bras. He then brought his force of 63,000 into action against Blücher's army of 83,000.⁸⁰ After an hour of inconclusive fighting, Napoleon dispatched an urgent message to Marshal Ney ordering him to send his First Corps, a force totaling 20,000 men, to the battlefield at Ligny.⁸¹ Instead of delivering the order through Marshal Ney's headquarters, Napoleon's courier took it directly to General D'Erlon, the First Corps commander. D'Erlon left immediately for Ligny, but he marched in the wrong direction and ended up behind the French lines.⁸²

When Ney later learned of D'Erlon's departure, he dispatched a message ordering the corps back to Quatre-Bras. The message was delivered to D'Erlon just as he reached the Ligny battlefield. Again D'Erlon obeyed instructions, thus

⁷⁸ Wootten, Waterloo 1815: The Birth of Modern Europe, 45

⁷⁹ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 197

⁸⁰ Andrew Uffindell, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 169

⁸¹ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 209

⁸² Uffindell, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 170

taking part in neither of the battles. That evening the Prussians withdrew, leaving 12,000 French troops dead or wounded.⁸³ Meanwhile, at Quatre-Bras, Ney waited several hours to begin his attack on the Anglo-Dutch force, this delay enabled Wellington to reinforce Quatre-Bras with several divisions of cavalry and infantry.⁸⁴

Early in the morning of 15 June a courier from Blücher reached Wellington at Quatre-Bras and informed him of the Prussian defeat at Ligny. Wellington promptly dispatched a message to Blücher suggesting that he swing to the northwest and join the Anglo-Dutch army for a united stand against Napoleon near the village of Mont-Saint-Jean, just south of Waterloo. Several hours later Wellington retired from Quatre-Bras, leaving behind a brigade of cavalry to mislead Marshal Ney. That same morning, Napoleon ordered Grouchy to take 30,000 troops and pursue Blücher's retreating army.⁸⁵

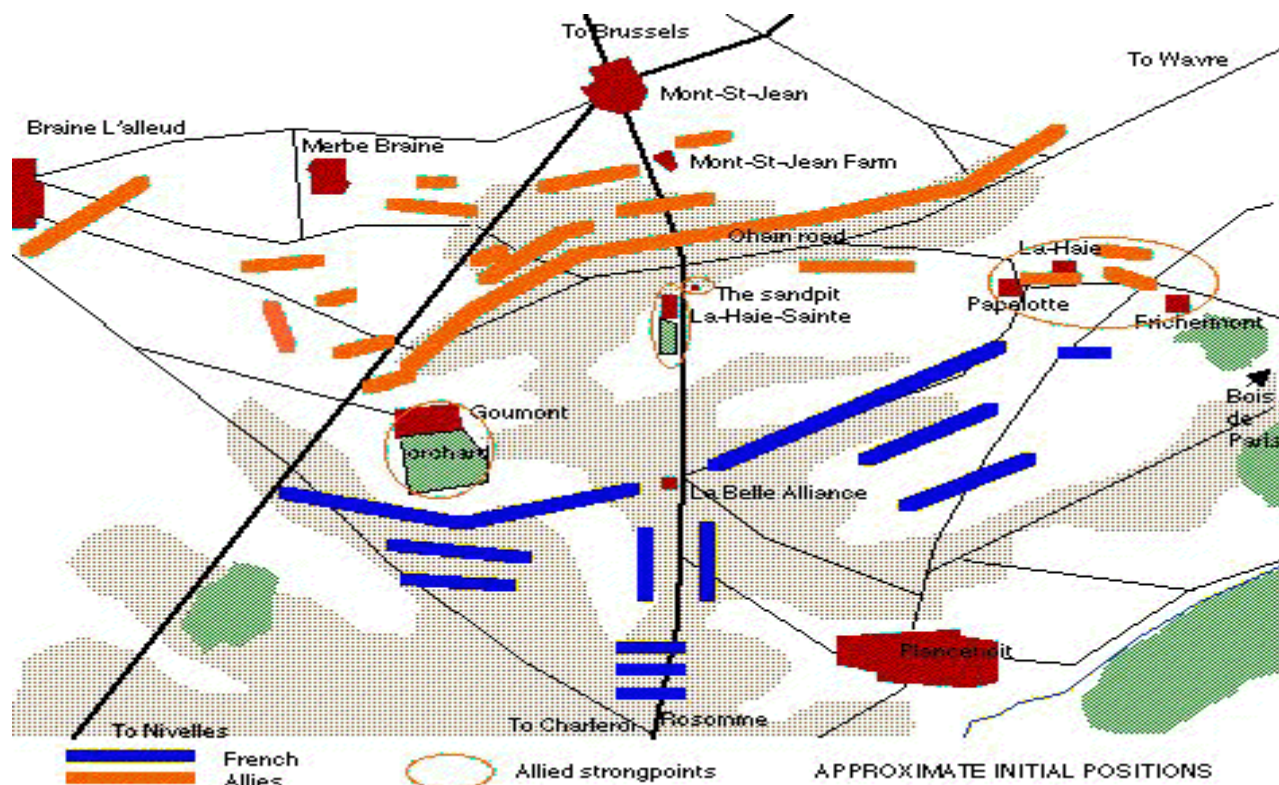
The Battle of Waterloo

Napoleon then sent messages to Ney ordering him to engage Wellington immediately. Ney was not aware of Wellington's retreat, and did not receive Napoleon's orders for three hours. Napoleon arrived at that afternoon, assumed command of Ney's forces, brushed aside the tiny force guarding Quatre-

⁸³ Uffindell, Napoleon: The Final Verdict, 170-171

⁸⁴ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 209

⁸⁵ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 210



The Initial positions at Battle of Waterloo⁸⁶

Bras, and set off with his army to pursue Wellington. However, heavy rains and muddy roads slowed his pursuit.⁸⁷

Early that evening Napoleon caught sight of the Anglo-Dutch army set in a high plain south of Mont-Saint-Jean. Both sides then prepared for battle. On the morning of 18 June 1815 the French and Anglo-Dutch armies were in battle position. The Anglo-Dutch forces, facing south were comprised 67,000 troops with 156 cannon, while Wellington had received assurances from Blücher that strong reinforcements would

⁸⁶ <http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/dhistorymaps>

⁸⁷ Rothenberg, *The Napoleonic Wars* 202

arrive during the day.⁸⁸ Wellington's strategy was therefore to resist Napoleon until Blücher's forces could arrive, overpower the emperor's right wing, and take the whole French line.

Napoleon's army, facing north, totaled 74,000 troops with 246 cannon. Thus initially he had superior combat power on the battlefield. The emperor's battle plan was to capture the village of Mont-Saint-Jean and cut off the Anglo-Dutch avenue of retreat to Brussels. The battle began at 11:30 a.m. with a fake move by Napoleon at Wellington's right. This unsuccessful maneuver was followed by an 80-gun French bombardment designed to weaken the allied center. Around 1 p.m. Napoleon saw advance elements of Blücher's army approaching from the east. Once again the emperor dispatched a message to Grouchy, apprising him of the situation and ordering him to block the Prussian forces.⁸⁹ Fierce cavalry and infantry battles were being fought along the ridge, south of Mont-Saint-Jean. In each instance the French attacks were heavily rejected.

At 4 p.m. Blücher's advance troops, who had been waiting for an opportune moment, entered the battle and forced the French to fall back about one half mile. A counterattack restored the French lines and pushed the Prussians back one mile to the northeast for better protection from artillery fire. Shortly after 6 p.m. Ney drove deep into the Anglo-Dutch center and seriously endangered Wellington's entire line.

⁸⁸ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 211

However, Wellington rallied and Ney was driven back. Napoleon then mounted a desperate offensive, during which he committed all but five battalions of his Old Guard to an assault on the allied center.⁹⁰

Allied infantrymen inflicted severe punishment on the French, crushing the offensive. Around 8 p.m. the Prussians, who had taken up positions on the extreme left of Wellington's line, drove through the French right wing, throwing most of Napoleon's troops into panic. Only actions fought by a few Old Guard battalions enabled the emperor to escape.⁹¹

As Napoleon's routed army fled along the Charleroi road, Wellington and Blücher conferred and agreed that Prussian brigades should pursue the beaten French. During the night of June 18 the Prussians drove the French back across the Sambre River.⁹² Napoleon signed his second abdication on 22 June 1815 and the Napoleonic wars were over.⁹³

Analysis of the Campaign

The lack of effective command and control was the major reason behind Napoleon's defeat. Tactical blunders committed by Napoleon's commanders also reinforce the view he was no

⁸⁹ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 205

⁹⁰ Connelly, Blundering to Glory, 216

⁹¹ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 208

⁹² Wootten, Waterloo 1815: The Birth of Modern Europe, 82

⁹³ Rothenberg, The Napoleonic Wars, 208

longer able to adequately supervise his forces. Ney failed to attack at Quatre Bras on 16 June 1815, where he could have routed the Prussian flank. This inaction left the Prussian army intact and enabled the British to pull back in an orderly fashion. Napoleon's plan called for separating the forces and defeating them individually. This became impossible after Ligny. The fighting by the French, in particular d'Erlon and his ultimately uncommitted corps, was uncoordinated and wasted as they were never committed to battle when they may have ensured a French victory.

Faster French reactions might have been able to compensate for the weather on 17 June that prevented the French from conducting a successful pursuit of the retreating British army. Napoleon might have defeated the British while they were in column and prevented them from choosing the battlefield. But this is all speculation - an unknown.

Force protection also played a significant role for the British at Waterloo. The French relied on artillery to soften up the British position to ensure a swift resolution to the battle. However, Wellington wisely chose positions that sheltered his troops from the massive bombardment.

Wellington scouted the battlefield of Waterloo and chose the positions to best conduct the battle. In essence, he chose the battlefield where he could best control his forces and provides the best force protection. Furthermore, Waterloo was

an allied victory by the British and Prussians. The consequences of French failures at Ligny and Quatre Bras permitted the forces of the two allies to link-up and impose the last crushing defeat on Napoleon. Thus, the three levels of war combined during this last campaign of the Napoleonic Wars to truly end in a decisive battle - albeit not as the Emperor had envisioned.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps warfighting functions conceptually are relevant to the Napoleonic Wars. They were as applicable then as they are today. These functions can be applied as a means of analysis to any operational level of conflict or campaign: The Napoleonic wars, the World Wars, or Military Operations Other Than War.

The warfighting functions, ***when used as an analytical tool***, clearly reveal strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes. Ulm-Austerlitz demonstrated what could happen when a force with greater mobility (due to superior leadership and training) engages an enemy with ineffective intelligence (due to a lack of situational awareness, deception, weather, etc). The Russian campaign showed how a smaller force, operating in familiar territory, and through skillful use of retrograde movement, can out maneuver a superior opponent and destroy it through logistical overreach. Finally, Waterloo revealed the importance of force protection (in this case, well chosen ground) and the effects of isolating a superior operational commander from his troops due to a breakdown in command and control (conflicting orders, over centralization, small staff, and lack of subordinate initiative).

Throughout the history of warfare, successful military leaders have sought an advantage over their opponent by applying strength against weakness, acting faster than an adversary can respond, and minimizing friendly casualties. This study reinforces these precepts. However, its purpose was to reveal these principles by examining Napoleonic campaigns through a method today's reader could understand and apply this process to the study of other conflicts. By using the contemporary construct (warfighting functions) to briefly analyze past campaigns, today's professional is better equipped to apply the lessons of the past to future campaign planning.

And Napoleon? His legacy remains as a military genius in the art of war. Napoleon's **successes and failures** continue to be part of the curriculum of advanced military schools worldwide. There is still much to learn.

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These sources were chosen for two reasons. One is because they extensively analyzed the three campaigns that were assessed in this paper. The others, rather than focus on a particular campaign, reviewed the Napoleonic Wars and the Emperor as a whole. Many of the sources were contradicted each other, but they provided different points of view.

The most interesting aspect of the sources was how some viewed Napoleon as a tactical genius, others as a blundering commander, and a few had no opinion whatsoever. Altogether, this proved useful in gathering information on the three campaigns studied.

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Appendix A

Biographical Notes

Alexander I, Tsar of Russia(1777-1825)- Participated in the Third Coalition but cooperated with Napoleon after 1807.

General Peter Bagration(1765-1812)- Served under Suvorov 1799; commanded rearguard 1805; fought at Austerlitz, Eylau and Friedland and mortally wounded at Borodino.

Field Marshall Mikhail Barclay De Tolly(1761-1818)- Minister of war since 1810. Modernized the Russian Army. Replaced by Kutuzov in 1812.

Viceroy Eugene De Beauharnais(1781-1824)- Napoleon's stepson; an able soldier, who distinguished himself at Wagram, Borodino and during retreat from Moscow.

Marshal Louis-Alexandre Berthier(1753-1815)- Napoleon's indispensable chief of staff 1798-1814. Promoted to marshal in 1804, committed suicide 1815.

Jerome Bonaparte King of Westphalia(1784-1860)- Napoleon's youngest brother who became king in 1807. He was relieved of command in Russia, but supported his brother in 1815 and at Waterloo.

Field Marshall Mikhail Kutuzov(1745-1813)- Commanded the Russian army in Germany, was pressured to attack at Austerlitz. He was defeated at Borodino 1812 but kept the army in existence.

Marshal Michel Ney(1769-1815)- Commanded the left wing of the French Army at Quatre Bras but dilatory and failed as battle commander at Waterloo.

Appendix B

Chronology of Napoleon's Life

- 1769** Napoleon Bonaparte born in Ajaccio, Corsica, August 15, the son of a poor Corsican lawyer.
- 1778** At age nine, Napoleon is sent to Royal Military College of Brienne in Paris. While there, he distinguishes himself by ability for mathematics and geography.
- 1784** Napoleon enters Military School of Paris
- 1785** Napoleon commissioned a Second Lieutenant at the age of 16
- 1789** Start of the French Revolution.
- 1792** Napoleon promoted to Captain.
- 1793** France adopts a new "de-Christianized" calendar, retroactive to 1792. The calendar begins on September 22, and consists of 12 months of 30 days apiece, with each month being divided into decades of ten days. The end of the year had 5 days (6 during leap years) designated by Roman numerals. This remained the official calendar of France until 1806.
- 1793** Napoleon takes command of the artillery of the Jacobin forces besieging Toulon.
- 1794** City of Toulon falls to a siege in which Napoleon distinguishes himself by the use of artillery.
- 1795** Napoleon, charged with protecting the Directory, rings the Tuileries with cannon. As the mob approaches, he discharges the cannon into the crowd, killing many and causing it to disband.
- 1796** Napoleon is promoted to Major General and named General-in-Chief of the Army of Italy at the age of 26.
- 1797** Napoleon defeats the Austrian army at Lodi; he personally leads French troops across a well defended bridge spanning the River Adda

- 1798** Napoleon heads a French expeditionary force into Egypt. He defeats the Mamelukes at the Battle of the Pyramids. The Directory converts Holland and Switzerland into satellite republics (Batavian and Helvetia, respectively).
- 1799** Coup d'état against the Directory establishes Napoleon as First Consul for ten years.
- 1802** Napoleon named Consul for life. France and England enter into Treaty of Amiens, leaving France the predominant power on the European Continent.
- 1804** Napoleon crowns himself as Emperor of the French.
- 1805** British navy under Horatio Nelson defeats French and Spanish fleet off of Cape Trafalgar, southwest coast of Spain. Twenty ships are captured, the British lose none, but a French sniper kills Nelson. Due to censorship of the press, the French people are not told of the loss for months.
- 1805** Napoleon defeats the Austrian army at Ulm, and then occupies Vienna. Napoleon defeats combined Russian and Austrian armies at Austerlitz.
- 1806** Napoleon defeats the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstadt.
- 1807** Napoleon defeats Russian army at Battle of Friedland.
- 1807** Having won at, Napoleon meets Emperor Alexander I of Russia on a raft in the Neman River near Tilsit, to negotiate a peace. The two are later joined by Russia's ally, King Frederick William III of Prussia.
- 1808** Napoleon meets Tsar Alexander I at the Congress of Erfurt, and renews the Franco-Russian Treaty of Tilsit.
- 1809** Napoleon defeated by Archduke Charles at the Battle of Aspern. Napoleon defeats Austrian army at Battle of Wagram, leading to Treaty of Schonbrunn.
- 1812** Napoleon conducts reconnaissance by day and into the night along the banks of the River Niemen.
- 1812** Napoleon invades Russia.

- 1812** Napoleon and French army enter Moscow in September 1812.
- 1812** Napoleon begins his retreat from Moscow in October 1812.
- 1812** Battle of the Nations at Leipzig results in Napoleon's retreat.
- 1814** Napoleon abdicates and is eventually exiled to Elba.
- 1815** Napoleon lands at Golfe-Juan, near Cannes, France, and begins his march to Paris.
- 1815** Napoleon enters Paris, the beginning of the "100 days"
- 1815** Coalition formed between Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. Each power agrees to provide 150,000 men, except Britain, who agrees to send subsidies instead of the full amount of troops.
- 1815** Battle of Waterloo begins June 15 1815.
- 1815** Battle of Waterloo ends June 18, 1815. Napoleon defeated and exiled to St. Helena, an island in the South Atlantic.
- 1821** Napoleon dies on St. Helena and is buried on the island.
- 1840** Napoleon's remains returned to France and re-interred in the Invalides in Paris.

